

Message Text

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ACTION AGR-20

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SUBJECT: TEN PERCENT OF USSR GRAIN AREA NOT HARVESTED AS OF
OCTOBER 1

DEPARTMENT PASS AGRICULTURE FOR G & F DIVISION, FAS

1. SUMMARY: HARVESTING IN VIRGIN LANDS SERIOUSLY IMPEDED BY
INCLEMENT WEATHER. UNLESS WEATHER IMPROVES -- AN UNLIKELY
PROSPECT -- QUANTITY AND ESPECIALLY QUALITY OF SPRING WHEAT
CROP EAST OF URALS WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED. END SUMMARY.

2. HARVESTING PROGRESS AS OF OCTOBER 1, 1973 REPORTED IN
IZVESTIYA, OCTOBER 3; AND PRAVDA AND SELSKAYA ZHIZN, OCTOBER 4.

3. TOTAL GRAIN (EXCLUDING CORN) REPORTED CUT ON 113.5 MILLION
HECTARES, 95 PERCENT SOWN AREA; THRESHED ON 107.8 MILLION
HECTARES, 95 PERCENT AREA CUT. IN RSFSR, GRAIN CUT 69.8
MILLION HECTARES, 94 PERCENT SOWN AREA; THRESHED ON 66.1
MILLION HECTARES, 95 PERCENT AREA CUT. IN KAZAKHSTAN, 22.7
MILLION HECTARES CUT, 96 PERCENT SOWN AREA; THRESHED ON 20.7,
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91 PERCENT AREA CUT.

4. THE LAST MILLIONS OF HEACTARES OF SMALL GRAIN ARE BEING HARVESTED IN THE VIRGIN LANDS. THRESHING NEARING COMPLETION IN ORENBURG AND OMSK OBLASTS, AND IN KRASNOYARSK KRAY. "SIGNIFICANT AREAS" REMAIN TO BE HARVESTED IN PERM, SVERDLOVSK, KURGAN, CHELYABINSK, KUSTANAY, AND A NUMBER OF OTHER OBLASTS WHERE FARMERS ARE PARTICLARLY "VEXED" BY RAIN. PARTY AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THESE AREAS MOBILIZING "ALL RESOURCES" IN ORDER TO BRING IN THE HARVEST UNDER "DIFFICULT" WEATHER CONDITIONS WITHOUT "ALLOWING LOSSES" AND TO "GUARD THE GRAIN AGAINST SPOILAGE" (SELSKAYA ZHIZN ARTICLE ON SUGARBEETS IN BASHKIR ASSR ALSO REFERS TO BAD WEATHER -- "RAIN HINDERS BEET DIGGING."). IN KAZAKHSTAN, WHILE ORENBURG OBLAST ACHIEVES HIGHEST DELIVERY RATE OF WHEAT TO ELEVATORS, KUSTANAY COMBINE OPERATORS ARE "FIGHTING HOUR BY HOUR AGAINST INCLEMENT WEATHER." ON SOME FARMSIN TSELINOGRAD OBLAST WINDROWS ARE BEING TURNED FOR DRYING IN PREPARATION FOR COMBINING.

5. COMMENT: ONLY 2.3 MILLION HECTARES OF GRAIN CUT AND 4.5 MILLION HECTARES THRESHED DURING WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 24-OCTOBER 1. THE LOWEST PREVIOUS WEEKLY FIGURES FOR CUTTING OF GRAIN THIS YEAR WAS 2.7 MILLION HECTARES SEPTEMBER 17-24. FOR THRESHING THE LOWEST FIGURES WERE; 4.5 MILLION HECTARES JULY 9-16; AND 6.3 MILLION HECTARES SEPTEMBER 17-24. AS A RESULT, ON OCTOBER 1, ABOUT 12 MILLION HECTARES, OR NEARLY 10 PERCENT TOTAL SMALL GRAIN AREA, REMAIN STANDING OR LYING IN THE FIELDS. MOST OF THIS IS IN THE RSFSR AND KAZAKHSTAN, WHERE RESPECTIVELY ABOUT 8.2 MILLION HECTARES (11 PERCENT) AND 2.9 MILLION HECTARES (OVER 12 PERCENT) OF GRAIN REMAIN UNHARVESTED. SIGNIFICANCE OF ABOVE DATA MAY BE JUDGED FROM FACT THAT AREA NOT HARVESTED (APPROXIMATELY 12 MILLION HECTARES) IS EQUAL TO 60 PERCENT TOTAL U.S. WHEAT ACREAGE; AND, ASSUMING AVEAGE PROJECTED YIELDS, ALMOST 15 MILLION TONS WHEAT STILL IN FIELDS ON OCTOBER 1.

6. CONCLUSION DRAWN FROM THE ABOVE DATA IS THAT THE SOVIETS ARE HAVING VERY SERIOUS PROBLEMS WHICH, UNLESS WEATHER CONDITIONS IMPROVE SUDDENLY AND SUBSTANTIALY, WILL RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN THE QUANTITY OF WHEAT HARVESTED. MORE SERIOUS STILL IS THE POTENTIAL LOSS ATTRIBUTABLE TO QUALITY DETERIORATION AND THE CONCOMITANT REDUCTION IN QUANTITY OF USABLE GRAIN.
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